

# FOCUS

Magazine of

# SANDES Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres

October - December 2018



## *Peace declared throughout the world*



*Jubilant peace celebrations at Piccadilly Circus in November 1918, at the end of WW1*

On November 11 at 11:00 am the nation with many others across the world will remember the Armistice which stopped the Great War one hundred years ago. At the time there was great rejoicing and excitement in the streets. However in many homes there were broken hearts because peace had been bought by the lives of so many young men on the battlefield. The war started as a consequence of one man's death and finished with over sixteen million deaths. Europe was devastated and the world was changed forever.

People today are divided on the justification of the war but freedom and peace have always come at a high price. Throughout

the country we see memorials to men who have fought and struggled hoping to create a better world. Fighting because they believed a cause was just and against tyranny and injustice. Fighting knowing that when politics and diplomacy have failed, it was always down to the soldier to stand in the gap and secure our peace and liberty.

The damage throughout Europe was unprecedented. Following the Armistice, political representatives from all sides sat down to work out the terms for a peace agreement. France had suffered very badly and insisted in the Treaty of Versailles that Germany pay a very high price in terms of recompense. This became a cause of

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growing resentment which in later years the Nazi party in Germany would use to sow the seeds for another global conflict within just one generation.

I believe at the end of WW1 there was a sincere desire to build a peace that would last. PM Lloyd George said his task was “to make Britain a land fit for heroes to live in.” A similar aspiration was voiced after the later struggles of the Second World War, when PM Clement Attlee had a vision to create a “New Jerusalem” in Britain. Throughout the ages men have strived to create this New Jerusalem. Ideologies’ have come and gone. Many wars have been fought with a real hope and promise that we could build a more free, just and perfect society.

It’s not the soldiers’ role to build this Utopia or that New Jerusalem that people seek. Their role is, when all else fails, to protect our freedom so everyone can live in hope, trust and peace. There is a great deal expected of them and they ask little in return. We are blessed to live in a country where our rights are protected in law and our liberty secured by the professional and courageous young men and women in the uniformed services.

As we commemorate one hundred years since the end of World War One, let us take time to consider both the pain of that generation and the legacy of freedom we have inherited from them. Since 1918 there have been more wars and conflicts and yet more sacrifice. We have to believe that these were not in vain because the alternatives would have been unthinkable.

Despite everything we still face very real threats and today real lasting peace still remains elusive and at best very fragile. Yet we still have freedom and the right to self-determination. Perhaps there is now too much focus on our rights rather than our responsibilities. Surely we have an obligation to exercise those rights we have inherited with the utmost responsibility and not just take them for granted. As they have been passed on to us we should not forget that we in turn must protect them for others.

We still have the right to make choices which will impact our lives and those around us. There are many issues and options facing us but the Bible gets straight to the heart of the matter when we are challenged to “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”

We will also be celebrating another event very soon when peace was declared at Christmas. The shepherds on a lonely Judean hillside seen a host of angels declaring the birth of our Lord Jesus. ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ He came to make a way for us to be at peace with God.

We live in an age of great uncertainty and although we may not be at war very few of us have real inner peace. But the Lord Jesus’ promise still holds. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”

We are told through God’s word that ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ and yet if we put our trust in the Lord Jesus and confess and turn away from our sin ‘He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’.

Yes, we may still face many challenges in our lives but He gives us real inner peace knowing that we are not alone and can call on Him because He has promised ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’. In your weakness he can be your strength.

If you have messed up you can have a new start, where the past will no longer define you. ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.’

To find real peace, give your life to Him. Our cover picture shows people from different nations celebrating peace but that will be nothing compared to the great multitude ‘from every nation, tribe and people’ that will be part of the greatest celebration of all in heaven. Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and know true and enduring peace.

# *Breaking down walls and building bridges*



*One of the cadets at camp in Ballykinlar celebrating her birthday in Sandes*

Jesus and his disciples had left Judea for Galilee. Jews travelled the long way around to avoid Samaria as they didn't like the Samaritans. Yet Jesus choose to go that way. About midday, He sent the disciples to get some food and sat down to rest at Jacob's well. Most people would come in the cool of the evening to draw water but a woman who was ostracised because of her colourful lifestyle, came alone in the heat of the day.

How would Jesus approach her? 'May I ask you a personal question? If you should die tonight, where would you spend eternity?'

There may be times when it is right to ask such a question, but this wasn't one of them. He knew that this woman was lonely and had issues. She needed loving acceptance but had been searching in all the wrong places.

Psychologists say that when we meet people we either build a bridge to that person or a wall between us. Jesus bridged the great social gap between Him and this

stranger by simply asking, "Will you please give me a drink of water." This opened up an interesting conversation and a revelation on living water. Jesus put His finger on both the needs and problems of her life. With compassion He unwrapped her life telling her that He knew she was living with a man who wasn't her husband having already gone through five husbands.

"You have to be a prophet," she said as they talked further on spiritual matters. "I know that Messiah is coming," she declared and Jesus answered "I am He". The disciples returned and were puzzled because Jesus was talking to a Samaritan but their unspoken prejudice did not dampen her excitement as she left her water-pot and rushed back to town. She told everyone she had met a man who knew everything about her past. Yet Jesus had not ignored or rejected her like many of them had. She challenged them 'Could this be the Messiah?' and many came out to see Jesus and many more came to faith.

Jesus knew this woman's deep need for acceptance. He gave her that and then revealed who He was. She believed in him and became an enthusiastic witness, like all believers should be. We should learn from this example of Jesus. We need not only discernment but also wisdom in how to use this knowledge. We have the answer to every need but as ambassadors of Christ we need to be sensitive enough to people's personal needs and "scratch 'em where they itch" just as He did on this occasion. Then perhaps God will move in their hearts to hear the testimony of hope through Christ Jesus.

We see people from various backgrounds come in to Sandes with different problems and we try to treat everyone equally and not be judgemental in our behaviour. To love them in the way that Christ does. Some people expect religious people to have a self-righteous viewpoint and put up walls and not be able to understand their problems. Just as Jesus reached out in love to the woman at the well so we can do the same to people coming into Sandes. With

this in mind we have spoken with many people who just need to talk with someone and know that regardless of their history or current situation, we really do care.

Over the past few months we have had a mixture of quiet days and busy days as lots of the 2 Rifles have been on exercise and deployment to many locations throughout the world. They are a really busy infantry battalion and are constantly on the move. It is rare now to have the whole battalion on camp together. Often on the day a company leave for their next duty there will be a large group of them come into the Centre for a last Sandes lunch before heading off. We can be queued out the door. It is great to see that they miss us as well as our good quality home style cooking when they are away from camp.

We have just finished a busy spell with two separate cadet camps in Ballykinlar. During these times we have been opening up in Lisburn during the day and Ballykinlar at night. The first camp was with around 200 cadets from the Gloucester area of England



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*Volunteers Uate and Lyndsey helping out at the cadets camp in Ballykinlar*

the second saw over 400 cadets from County Durham. Although these were very busy evenings, they were enjoyable with a real vibrancy about the place. We saw many Bibles and daily reading books being taken and there was more than 300 dog tags distributed. We were very tired but extremely blessed, not only with the help from volunteers from our council, soldiers and our usual volunteers. In the midst of the busyness we did get good opportunities to talk to the cadets and instructors and to tell of some of the things that Jesus has done in our lives and how He could do the same in theirs.

We had some sad news with the passing of a friend Frankie Hanna to cancer. He was a regular visitor to Sandes and a larger than life character about the camp. He was loved by everyone and this was reflected by a very large turnout at his funeral. Our prayers are with his wife Wendy and three children at this sad time. We are reminded of the brevity of life and of our need to know God and to share Him with others.

We have had the blessing of the numbers increasing in our women's prayer meeting

on Monday mornings, despite the break over the summer. It is great to see new families arriving on camp coming into the Centre and joining with us in Christian fellowship. We also have a new Padre for the 2 Rifles and we say welcome Ivan. We are looking forward to having fellowship with him and the rest the chaplaincy team.

The next few months will see more changes as we will be moving house, God willing. Our future Mission Director will start alongside Tommy before he retires. We would like to take this opportunity to officially thank Tommy for all the help and encouragement (spiritual, physical and operational) that he has given us over the years. We pray that he will continue to know God's blessings in his life throughout retirement. He won't become a stranger and we will continue to value his friendship.

Thank you to all who continue to pray for us and the work in the Lisburn and Ballykinlar centres. We ask you to pray for continued wisdom as we seek to meet the needs of the people coming into Sandes.

*Trevor & Jan Pinkerton*

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# *Times change but God's purposes endure forever*



*The Junior Soldiers at their passing off parade in Harrogate*

We have just returned from summer leave ready to face whatever challenges lie before us. Our plans for summer leave had to be changed at the last moment due to a minor medical issue which meant we could not travel abroad. However we found real peace as we drove our mobile home around and found some beautiful retreats here at home. We feel restored, refreshed and excited to see what the Lord has in store for us here in Harrogate in the year ahead.

Mark and Sal have returned from their time helping out in Sandes at Pirbright. They have learned a lot from the experience and we are glad to have them back with us. We are praying that James and Michelle, the new Support Couple in Pirbright will settle quickly into the work and find a real sense of God's purpose in everything they do for the military community there.

Just before the summer leave we had our

big pass off parade for Alamein, Burma, Cambrai and Peninsula companies. I always attend these parades but Jim and I thought it would be nice for Mark and Sal to enjoy this experience too. They watched the whole parade and really enjoyed the special atmosphere about the camp as all the Junior Soldiers celebrated their special achievement of successfully completing their training. In the midst of the really hot weather it turned out to a perfect day which wasn't too hot for those on parade or the many proud families squeezed into the stands.

For us who have seen the recruits from the day they start, this display seems particularly incredible. We remember them awkwardly putting on uniforms and trying to keep in step as they moved around the parade ground. Most of them were shy and retiring, uncertain from one day to the next. They looked and behaved like children but

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*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness;  
and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33*

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how they have changed. They are now confident young men and women, unfazed by the demands of parading in front of so many people. I just feel so proud that I could hug them all. They are a credit to themselves, their families and to the training staff who put so much effort into developing them.

The recruits always tell us how much they appreciate Sandes. They keep saying 'We love this place' which is a great honour and encouragement to us. Many of those leaving voiced their disappointment that we didn't have a Centre where they were going. Maybe they could put a good word in for us with their new commanders. We have just had the arrival of 276 new junior soldiers as the first of this year's intake. We were available to meet and greet them and their families at the reception day. It was nice to hear junior soldiers from Waterloo Company speaking very positively of Sandes to the new intake.

This morning we watched as the new intake was being shown around the camp. We could see the apprehension mixed with excitement. We look forward to hosting them in Sandes as part of their induction

and hope that we will be able to help and share our hope with them during their time at the Army Foundation College. It is a great opportunity for them and there is so much going on in camp to enjoy including different sports and a multitude of outdoor and adventure activities. We also have our own new ideas for this intake so watch this space. Our little Bible quiz has not been as regular as we intended when the Centre was really busy and we were without spare hands. It has been hard juggling the work load but we still managed to hold a few and the lads and girls enjoyed taking part and of course winning the big pizza which always brings a smile. We have been working with the chaplains to have a new dog tag specially made to commemorate the end of the First World War. They are currently under production and it will be a race to get them to Harrogate on time. They have the college crest on one side with the date of the armistice and a soldier's prayer on the reverse side. We hope they will be well received.

We have a new coke machine to the delight of our junior soldiers. The old one was no longer being maintained. Jim moved the counter forward to make it fit. Our boiler



*Junior Soldiers coming into Sandes in Harrogate*



*Sandes 'A Home from Home' with Christ at the centre.*

finally gave up the ghost and so we are glad to have had a new one installed just in time for the new term. We have a new large sign across our counter which reads 'Christ is the centre of our home' which can be seen by everyone coming into Sandes and we trust it will touch hearts.

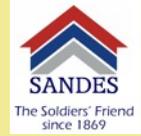
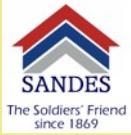
We see a lot of new faces as the training staff change over again. They are just as precious as our young Junior Soldiers and we need to care for them too. Some of the lads have signed off the Army and moved on to do other things. We wish them all well wherever the future takes them and we hope the little seeds of faith planted in Sandes will bear fruit in due season.

As we start to feel the first shivers of autumn before the cold chill of winter finally sets in, I think of the many seasons of Sandes since it started. Next year Sandes will be celebrating 150 years serving the Lord within the Armed Forces. What a wonderful legacy that has stood the test of time and what a wonderful blessing and privilege that we are still part of this work today. If the Lord wills we hope to be around for many years to come. On the same date this year we celebrated both our 42nd

wedding anniversary and 15 years in Sandes at Harrogate. Jim will be 65 next year although to me he will always be my handsome young prince. Despite the passing of time we trust in the Lord's strengthening and enablement as we push on with a real sense of continuing purpose in Sandes.

Our Mission Director, Mr Tommy Mearns will be retiring at the end of this year. We all feel very sad that Tommy is leaving but are excited to see what the Lord has planned for his future. He was always supportive and genuinely cared for our personal well being, physically and spiritually. It was a blessing to see how God used him to keep the door open for Sandes. He encouraged us to 'keep the main thing, the main thing' and he sought the Lord's provision on our behalf. It wasn't always easy but his faithfulness shone through and he was an example and encouragement to us all. We wish Tommy every blessing in all the Lord has in store for him. We would like to say a sincere thank you for all he has done for all of us in Harrogate. We thank all of you who have prayerfully supported this wonderful work over many years.

*Jim & Maryjane McCracken*



# Prayer Diary

2nd October	CVWW meeting in London
19th October	Sandes Prayer meeting @ Noon in Beacon Church
12th November	Sandes Council meeting @ Crescent Church
16th November	Sandes Prayer meeting @ Noon in Beacon Church
10th December	Sandes Prayer meeting @ Orangefield Pres Church

## Message of thanks

*As I step down from the role of Mission Director at the end of this year, I would like to take this last opportunity to say thank you to so many people. I want to thank all the workers in Sandes and reiterate what I have said many times before that you are very special people. Thanks for all your hard work and for the trust and support you gave me in the midst of all the uncertainty.*

*Thanks to the many prayer warriors who have faithfully stood in the gap and those who given financially over all the years and trusted Sandes to be good stewards with their giving. You will never know just how important your prayerful support has been.*

*A big thanks for those who have served on the committee over the years. Without some of you I would have really struggled. There are also those within the military community who have shown real favour to Sandes and managed to smooth the way for us when the road got rough. Then our Vice Presidents, men of real high standing who are prepared to put their reputations on the line as they promote Sandes, something we should never take for granted.*

*Most importantly I want to thank the Lord for His guidance and leading. I know in my heart that I saw the Lord do amazing things during my time here despite all my inadequacies. We came through very difficult times and at times the future of the Mission was in doubt. God calls us to faithful and trust Him and in doing so we saw Him quieten the storm, soften hard hearts and open doors.*

*It has been my privilege to have worked in Sandes and to have meet so many wonderful people. I trust that the Mission will be in calmer waters going ahead and will see great a harvest from the many seeds of faith planted through the years.*

*Thank you and God bless you all,*

*Tommy Mearns*

# October 2018

*Please pray for:*

**1** more opportunities for induction nights for recruits in Pirbright.

**2** those Missions attending CVWW meeting in London today.

**3** renewed sense of vision and a fresh anointing on Sandes as they reshape the leadership team.

**4** Sandes Deputation in Armagh Methodist Church this morning.

**5** successful Visa applications for James and Deise working in Pirbright

**6** those who recently came to faith in Pirbright as they move on to next stage of training.

**7** a secure spiritual climate on camps and especially in our Centres

**8** good rapport with the new recruits coming to Sandes in Harrogate on induction nights.

**9** thanks for our volunteers and for more Godly volunteers to help us in all Centres.

**10** for the Good News Children's Club in Sandes at Holywood tonight.

**11** the transition to a new Mission Director, Mr Gary Robb in Head Office.

**12** praise God for recent breakthroughs but pray we would see more people being saved.

**13** Saturday night opportunities to witness to the recruits in Pirbright.

**14** good and supportive relationships with Padres and other Christian agencies.

**15** marriages and family life of soldiers which come under great strain.

**16** Sandes Deputation in Finaghy Methodist Church this afternoon.

**17** God's favour and blessing on all Christian ministries to the military.

**18** that new CVWW charter would still confirm Army housing without charge for Sandes.

**19** Funding for new furniture in the Pirbright and Harrogate Centres.

**20** for the Cadets night in Sandes at Ballykinlar this evening.

**21** the Lord to raise up Godly men both in Government and in Command positions in the Military.

**22** the families and soldiers of 1 Scots battalion based in Holywood as they are deployed in various duties.

**23** new opportunities for outreach in each of our Centres.

**24** Sandes Deputation in Carryduff Presbyterian Church tonight.

**25** a time of refreshment at the 'Still Time' prayer meeting in Sandes in Lisburn today.

**26** Sandes' value to be recognised and supported by those within Army welfare.

**27** the well being of the family members of those working in Sandes

**28** courage and confidence for Christians serving in the Armed Forces.

**29** hope rather than despair for those suffering emotional distress as a result of military service.

**30** opportunities for working with families coming into all our Centres

**31** Sandes Deputation this morning at Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church

*Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. Luke 18:1*

## *Please pray for: November 2018*

- 1 a real and significant change in the spiritual climate within the military community.
- 2 people to consider supporting Sandes Mission in their legacy planning.
- 3 for the Cadets night in Sandes at Ballykinlar this evening.
- 4 the safety of our soldiers who are deployed in various places throughout the world.
- 5 sustainable footfall with more outreach opportunities in all of the Sandes Centres
- 6 Sandes in Pirbright would continue to feel a positive change in the spiritual climate on camp and a fresh anointing on the work.
- 7 the reorganisation of Head Office as we go through transition to new Mission Director.
- 8 reflection on eternal issues as the Nation commemorates 100 years since Armistice.
- 9 opportunities to hold the Bible Quiz in Harrogate
- 10 soldiers and their families to come to a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 11 Sandes commemorative dog tags being distributed today in Catterick and Harrogate.
- 12 the Sandes Council as they meet today to discuss the future of Sandes.
- 13 Sandes workers would know real peace and encouragement in their endeavours
- 14 the children's Good News Club in Sandes at Holywood tonight.
- 15 Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres
- 16 those attending the Sandes monthly prayer meeting today.
- 17 God's favour reflected through those in command making any decisions regarding Sandes future.
- 18 Padres would know the Lord's leading in services within Garrison churches.
- 19 soldiers and their families having to deal with physical or emotional injury as a result of military service.
- 20 good opportunities to hold the Bible Quiz in Harrogate.
- 21 growth in the Sandes prayer and financial support base to sustain the work.
- 22 the 'Still Time' prayer meeting in Sandes at Lisburn this afternoon.
- 23 soldiers and their families suffering from the consequences of conflict.
- 24 Opportunities with recruits coming into Sandes on Saturday evenings.
- 25 conviction of Holy Spirit to awaken people within the military community from spiritual apathy and unbelief.
- 26 Ladies prayer meeting this morning in Sandes in Lisburn
- 27 distribution of Sandes regimental Dog tags to the Welsh Guards in Pirbright.
- 28 Sandes deputation at the Ely Centre in Enniskillen.
- 29 fresh ideas and effective ways for outreach within and beyond the Sandes Centres.
- 30 successful conclusion of the transition of responsibly to new Mission Director

*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man  
avails much James 5:16b*

## *Please pray for: December 2018*

- 1 for the joint Christmas party with Good News Club and the Youth Club in Hollywood.
- 2 encouragement for Christians in the Armed Forces to live and share their faith
- 3 Monday morning women's prayer meeting Sandes Lisburn
- 4 favour with the Commanding Officers and their teams on the camps where we have Sandes Centres.
- 5 Sandes to remain primarily focused on our objectives and trust that sufficient support will be forthcoming.
- 6 protection and promotion of Christian values within military and the Government.
- 7 opportunities in Hollywood despite the low footfall.
- 8 hearts of recruits coming into Sandes at Pirbright tonight would be open and receptive.
- 9 all the Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres
- 10 Those attending the Sandes monthly prayer meeting and lunch today at Orangefield Presbyterian Church
- 11 Sandes to remain both financially solvent and spiritually effective.
- 12 protection for our troops serving and training throughout the world
- 13 Holy Spirit to bring revival throughout the military community and beyond.
- 14 wisdom for those serving on Sandes Council as they consider options and plan the way forward for the Mission.
- 15 for the Cadets night in Sandes at Ballykinlar today.
- 16 a deep revelation of God's love to all attending garrison services today.
- 17 those Junior Soldiers experiencing the Christmas spirit in Sandes at Harrogate would realise the significance of the season.
- 18 new opportunities with those using the family room in Sandes at Lisburn
- 19 Sandes would know a fresh anointing in the years ahead as we face the new challenges of this age.
- 20 all Christian agencies working together to bring the hope of the Gospel to our Armed Forces.
- 21 military families separated, especially those with children during this festive season.
- 22 rest and restoration for all Sandes workers during this holiday period.
- 23 Divine inspiration for Padres as they lead Church services today.
- 24 soldiers who may feel separated or lonely today would experience a sense of God's loving presence.
- 25 *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men*
- 26 God's anointing on the work of Sandes in the years ahead.
- 27 our vice presidents as they continue to represent Sandes within the wider military community.
- 28 rest and restoration for the Sandes staff during this holiday period.
- 29 Government as they make decisions on future and deployment of our Armed Forces.
- 30 all Christian agencies working together to bring the hope of the Gospel to our Armed Forces.
- 31 an awareness of the loving call of God as people reflect on the past and the future.

*Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice Psalm 141 :2*

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# *Presenting a living and absolute hope*



*Military families using the facilities of Sandes in Holywood.*

Every day we rub shoulders with people who express how hard life can be, especially Army life but there are those who find it harder than others. Some are taken back when I say, putting our trust in Christ as our Saviour does little to change that. Nothing in the Bible promises us a free pass merely because we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, some of our wounds may not heal and some of our deficiencies may not be corrected during this lifetime. They may even get worse. Yet all of our deformities and weakness are only temporary.

Anticipating what God has in store for us can put a smile in our heart. Hope gives us poise and lets us live with inner strength, because we know that one day we will be dramatically different than we are now.

If you are in some way damaged by past abuse or feeling defeated by sin, or if you feel so inferior to others that you would walk with your eyes to the ground, take

heart in what God has in store for you. Live today with the courage God gives you. Make what you can of your afflictions. But rejoice because all that degrades and limits you is only temporary. It will be gone, some of it sooner rather than later.

If you have a living hope in Christ, you can deal with your past because of your future. God's glorious best for you lies up ahead. It is this message of living hope we have the privilege to share in Holywood.

**The message of living hope through the summer work:** Our Holiday Bible Club went well even though we were down in numbers from previous years. Please pray with us for the boys and girls who attended, they listened intently to the Bible lessons and learned their memory verse. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help them to understand what they have been taught throughout the year and during the summer club and in understanding come to know Christ as their Saviour.

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*Blessed be (God)...who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope. 1 Peter 1:3*

At the end of June we were asked to facilitate another families' breakfast as the previous one was such a success. On the day we catered for some ninety plus and again a good time was had by all. Also at the request of the families' officer we facilitated a SAAFA fundraiser. After everything was done and dusted most expressed their appreciation and thanked us for all we had done for them and their families. It make it all worthwhile when several asked for the UCB booklets and other literature, this gave rise to several opportunities to not only talk as I shared part of my testimony, but also to listen to their views on the Christian faith.

**The message of living hope through the winter work:** We are now looking forward to the new season of Good News Clubs which will be starting in October. We are praying that those children who were contacted through the families' breakfast at the end of June will be able to attend the club. Pray with us for Joyce and Stephanie and myself as we seek to minister to the children and even their mums and dads who from time to time stay for club. Pray we would all know God's power and the Holy Spirit's leading as we faithfully teach

these young children. This has been a fruitful ministry over the years and we trust the Lord will continue to bless it.

**The message of living hope in the lives of those we continue to say goodbye to:**

Over this year we have been continually saying our goodbyes, as I am sure you are all aware the regiment continues to be on the move. Many have been posted to other camps and we miss all of them and their families. Those soldiers that remain here are often sent on deployments or training programmes abroad. We thank God not only for the impact that each have had on our lives, but also for the opportunities we have had to play some small part in their lives. Pray with us for the seed that has been sown and for each family that we have had the privilege of ministering to whether it's been through prayer, a listening ear, Ulster fry or something else.

As we approach a new year of opportunity, we have real hope and expectation that we will see the Lord work in a special way through Sandes. Thank you for your prayerful support. Have a good Christmas and a blessed New Year.

*Chris and Marlene Wilkinson*



*Joyce and Stephanie with the children in the Good news Club in Sandes at Holywood*

## Introducing the new Sandes Mission Director



*Sons George, Charlie and wife Caroline with Gary Robb, the future Sandes Mission Director*

Hopefully, by the time you are reading this, I will be in situ at Sandes, and will have started the process of trying to learn as much as I can about the Mission and how it operates from Tommy and the staff at Head Office.

I am approaching my 50th birthday and married to Caroline, who is a full-time wife and Mum to our family. We have two sons, Charlie and George. Charlie has just started his second year at Newcastle University studying Medicine, and George is in Year 13 at Sullivan Upper School. We worship at Holywood Baptist Church, where we are involved as Home Group leaders and I am the Church Secretary. My spare time is spent fly-fishing, playing golf and watching school and Ulster rugby.

I have had a long-standing interest and connection to Sandes since the 1980's, when my father served on the Council for several years, and it has been a mission that has been in our thoughts and prayers for the many years since then.

When I saw that the position of Mission Director was coming up, I felt excited at the possibility, and after much prayer and discussion with Caroline, I applied for the role. After a long and thorough process, I

answered, and I was confident that God was calling me to serve Him with Sandes.

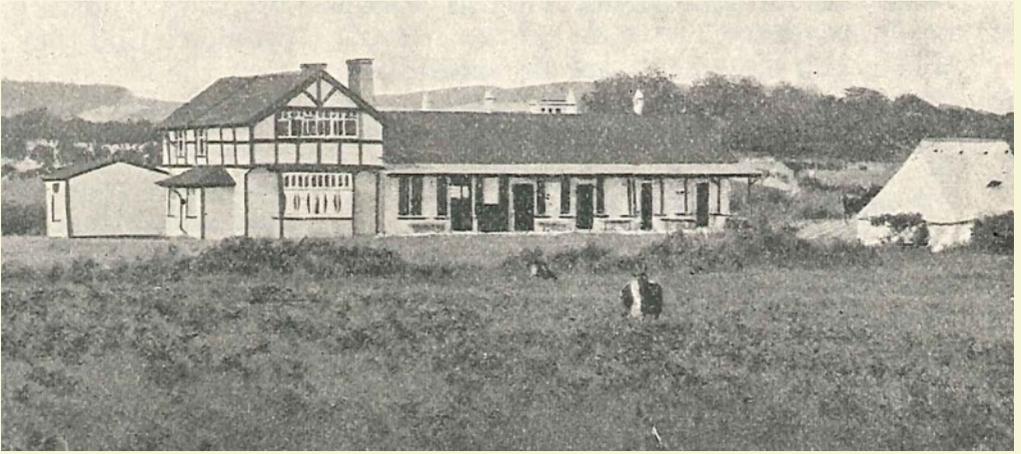
To say I am excited about what lies ahead for me in this role is an understatement. I am looking forward to learning from Tommy about the Mission, meeting all my new colleagues at the Sandes Centres and seeing how each of the Centres operate. I am also excited about continuing to develop the relationship that Sandes has with our Armed Forces, and look forward to all that lies ahead.

When Tommy hands over the reins at the end of this year, I know I'll "have big shoes to fill". I also know that with the support of the Council and our prayerful supporters we can seek God's will, trusting He will complete His purposes in Sandes. Most importantly, I am looking forward to seeing the Spirit of God work through the Centres with soldiers hearing and responding to the Good News of Jesus Christ!

As Sandes moves into a new era, I am humbled and privileged to be called to the task of carrying on the work of the Mission. I will give of my all to this role in Sandes, and simply ask that you continue to prayerfully support the work of Sandes.

*Gary Robb*

# Appeal at the end of the Great War in 1919



*Sandes Soldiers' Home in Ballykinler as it was during the Great War*

*During the war this little home, a green wooden hut with many windows and veranda, build originally for a summer musketry camp, has seen a great deal of soldiering.*

*First the Belfast Brigade of the Ulster Division, men who used the Home and fully loved it. We have had the Stafford regiments, North and South, who came to train here. The Scottish regiments of the KOSB and Scots Fusiliers, an Officers' Company, Cadets and for a while Ballykinlar became a Command Depot and held 1,000 ASC, 1000 RAMC and 1000 Scottish and 1000 Irish, all wounded convalescents. The little Home was then often overcrowded as indeed it has been all through the war. The convalescents called out the greatest kindness and sympathy of Co Down civilians, who opened their homes and hearts and purses to them most generously.*

*A gift of cosy easy chairs was presented to the Home and a billiard table. Much of the necessary money having been subscribed by the residents of Co Down.*

*Once again the camp is full of recruits and also many old regulars and ex-prisoners of war, who enjoy the quiet comfort and*

*sympathy of Miss Sandes Home. It needs very little imagination to picture what an influence this Home can be. In this bare and isolated Camp, it stands for home comforts, home fare in our coffee rooms, home interests in their personal concerns and above all tender and inspiring reminders of the Home in Heaven.*

*The evening Bible classes and meetings are always well attended. The Sunday Services and Lantern Lectures have often been packed. Ballykinlar Soldiers' Home brings happy memories and many a man thanks God that he was stationed here. Miss Eva Maguire and Mr John Kinahan who have just returned from four years at the Front with Sandes and will speak at Keswick this year about their experiences alongside some soldiers who have thrilling stories to tell of German prison Camps and from the Firing Line.*

*Now we have peace, this doesn't mean closing down our Soldiers' Homes. The need for them is as great as ever. Every day numbers of new men come flocking into the New Army. What are their lives going to be? Give us a chance and support us in keeping these Homes open and we will work night and day for our soldiers.*

*Forward Magazine 1919*

# Building a team for the future in Pirbright



*A happy birthday serenade for Deise from a group of recruits outside Sandes*

Recently we said goodbye to Mark and Sal as they went back to Harrogate and Prashant who has gone on to University. However we welcomed James and Michelle as our Support Couple and Deepa as a Centre Assistant. Thank you to those who left for your wonderful service and for those who arrived we pray God will bless your time at Pirbright. Maryjane's advice to us was always 'keep the main thing, the main thing' and God will honour your service. Remember the heart of Sandes and our call from God. It can be easy to lose focus with so much going on and we must constantly remind ourselves why we are here.

It is interesting working with the military and hear the values they try to instill during training. One of the Core Values of the Army is integrity. From our first day here in Sandes that is the word that God gave to Deise. We can never pretend to be anything other than what we are in God and we must look to honour Him in all that we do. Integrity needs to be at the core of everything, both in our work and our private lives. We cannot expect to say one thing

and live another, as it would undermine our testimony to those we reach out to.

Another of the core values is loyalty and this is big in the Army with regimental loyalties etc. In the heat of battle it is often said that soldiers fight primarily for their comrades. Sandes is a big family and that sense of unity and single purpose is so important to us as well. We too are in a battle and need to stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight. We are grateful for your prayerful support more than you will ever imagine. The enemy knows our weakness and will do everything to exploit it by putting hurdles in our way or as Deise calls them 'blocking stones'. We need each other and our selfless oneness is in itself a wonderful testimony of the family of God.

Other Army Core values include selfless commitment. Sandes can be hard work both physically and emotionally. It is only through the spiritual motivation that we find strength to endure. We know that God has called us to care for these young people and to give of ourselves knowing that He gave His all for us. If we were to lose sight

of the spiritual dimension we would soon wilt but God is faithful.

The Centre has been quieter than hoped but this is a blessing in disguise at the moment because it allows us to train and integrate those who have joined our team and we trust that attendances will return to normal in the months ahead. We recently had visits from a number of Missionary friends from Guinea Bissau and YWAM. There were all very encouraging about our work here. Sometimes we need this external reference to refresh and encourage us as we question whether we are making the difference.

The recruits and soldiers themselves put their finger on the pulse of Sandes. We had a few final week recruits in and they were looking at the breakfast menu. I asked 'Did you not get your breakfast in the mess hall?' His touching response was 'Yes, but here the food is made with love'. The secret ingredient for a healthy lifestyle, God's love.

We are glad to see that Bibles are still being taken from our table. Probably not as many as before but the numbers in the Centre are down. When Deise has an opportunity to speak and pray with someone she will

always try to follow it up with the presentation of a Bible.

One of our Christian recruits who we had been helping came in to see us after a few weeks absence. We were so glad to see that he was still praising the Lord through all his difficulties. It is such a privilege to be able to help and encourage such precious people. A female platoon have asked to book the TV room for a movie night. There are about 21 of them. We have offered to supply the popcorn and Deise will also have the opportunity to talk and pray with them.

We have a new CO, Lt Col Rob Sandford so we would ask you to pray for him and his team during his tenure in Pirbright. James and Deise are both renewing visas to allow them to work in the UK and we trust that they will both know the Lord's favour as He smooths the path before them. We also need to replace some furniture in the Centre. The tables were getting a bit sticky so we had to sand them down but some of the sofas are now well beyond repair.

Please pray that the Lord will provide our needs and continue to open doors of opportunity here in Pirbright.

*Martin & Deise & team*



*A group of young women under training coming to Sandes in Pirbright*



# SANDES

The Soldiers' Friend since 1869



*As a Christian Mission we depend on your prayerful and financial support to sustain this work. Please consider making a donation or joining our mailing list. Stand with us as we seek to bring Christian love and witness to those within the military and help us secure this little foothold for the Gospel.*

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*I would like to arrange for a speaker from Sandes for my Church group.*



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# SANDES

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